

STREET SMART

August 4, 2004

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Meeting Summary of the SANBAG Board of Directors

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■ Highway 395 receives grant for safety improvements

Safety improvements are on the way for US Highway 395 through the Victor Valley and north desert, thanks to a \$348,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety.

OTS awarded the grant to the California Highway Patrol to designate the highway as a "safety corridor." Frequent collisions, a number of which have been fatal, prompted the award of the grant.

Funds will be used for increased law enforcement, including helicopter patrols, new striping, signs and a public awareness safety program. The area targeted is between Interstate 15 in Hesperia and Route 58 at Kramer Junction.

SANBAG staff members have been active on the Highway 395 Task Force, the group which has spearheaded the effort to obtain the safety designation.



Highway 395, which is a frequent truck and vacation route, will receive \$348,000 in safety improvements, including more law enforcement patrols, signs, lane striping and an awareness campaign.

SANBAG also is continuing to support future infrastructure improvements to Highway 395. While a long-term project is being studied, SANBAG is helping to secure funding for an interim widening project between Hesperia and Adelanto. This project will widen the highway to four lanes with a continuous center left-turn lane. SANBAG has awarded \$1.4 million in federal Surface Transportation Program funds toward the \$2 million Project Approval and Environmental Document phase of this project. The agency is working to secure the remaining \$600,000 to fully fund this phase of the interim widening project.

■ SANBAG recognizes Zureick for five years of service

Board members commended SANBAG Transportation Planning Analyst Andrea Zureick (see photo at right) for completing five years of service to the organization.

President Paul Biane presented a service pin to Zureick during the meeting to thank her for her tenure. She also was recognized with a certificate and SANBAG polo shirt earlier this week at a staff meeting.



■ SANBAG sells former office building on Arrowhead Avenue

Board members accepted a bid of \$297,000 from The Anchor Group for the purchase of SANBAG's former office building at 472 N. Arrowhead Avenue in San Bernardino.

The bid, which was close to the appraisal price of \$300,000, was received during an auction on July 12. Only one bid was received.

In May, the Board of Directors declared the property as surplus, due to the upcoming move of the agency to the recently restored Santa Fe Depot on 3rd Street in San Bernardino. SANBAG relocated to the Depot in mid-June.

The funds will be used to repay the inter-fund loan from Measure I, the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements in San Bernardino County.

■ Rail-Volution conference set for Sept. 18-22 in Los Angeles

Members of the Board were invited to attend the 10th annual Rail-Volution conference next month in Los Angeles to learn how to create "livable communities with transit." Attendees will learn how transit is being used to provide viable options for traveling within and among communities across the nation. For more information and registration materials, visit www.railvolution.com

Down the road ...

- Aug. 11: Administrative Committee, 9 a.m.
- Aug. 18: Plans & Programs Committee, 12 noon

Legal challenge filed to block Measure I from November ballot

SANBAG learned August 3 that the San Geronio Chapter of the Sierra Club has filed legal action against the agency and the County of San Bernardino to prevent Measure I from being placed before voters in the November election.

Director of Management Services Deborah Barmack, who is serving as Executive Director Norm King's designee during his vacation, provided an update about the lawsuit at the Board of Directors meeting.

Neither SANBAG nor the County of San Bernardino has been served with a copy of the lawsuit, so it is difficult to comment on the specifics of the action, Barmack said. However, she made the following general points about Measure I:

- "If Measure I is not continued beyond its expiration date, it will strike a devastating blow to the traveling public in this county. Measure I provides half of the transportation funding in San Bernardino County. Without Measure I funds, local governments will be ill equipped to maintain local roads in a safe condition, and we will not be able to keep traffic flowing on freeways and highways throughout this county."
- "The legal filing, we have learned, may relate to requirements for environmental review. As you all are well aware, SANBAG is a very environmentally sensitive organization, and we strive to be good stewards of our natural resources."
- "Under the current Measure I program, millions of dollars have been spent to protect endangered species, cultural resources and to construct storm drain improvements associated with transportation projects."
- "Every project under the current and future Measure I program has and will follow the processes mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act or the National Environmental Protection Agency, as required. These environmental reviews will be conducted on a project by project basis, well before the start of construction."
- "We are confident that SANBAG has performed all necessary and appropriate actions to place Measure I before the voters in November. The voters should have the right to decide whether or not to support the continuation of Measure I beyond its expiration date."
- "The real challenge for SANBAG now is to continue to educate the public about the progress made under Measure I and which projects will be completed if the Measure is extended."



SANBAG will continue to monitor the legal action and keep the Board of Directors apprised of new information. Once a copy of the legal action is received, efforts will be made to evaluate the merits of the complaint and determine the impact, if any, on the election process.

Other news ...

■ SANBAG will hold public hearings about unmet transit needs in the mountain and desert regions of San Bernardino County next month. Information from the hearings will help transit operators gain a greater understanding about bus service needs that are not being met under current schedules and to use this information for developing the budget for next year.



Public hearings will be held as follows:

- Upper Desert Region: September 20, 9:30 a.m., City of Victorville Council Chambers
- Mountain Region: September 20, 1 p.m.; City of Big Bear Lake Council Chambers
- Lower Desert Region: September 23, 4 p.m., Morongo Basin Transit Authority, Joshua Tree

■ Advertising for construction bids will start August 5 for the next phase of work on Route 210 in Rialto and San Bernardino.

The work will include excavation, paving of the freeway lanes and construction of overpasses and underpasses in the two cities. The contract also will encompass lighting, sign installation and the construction of on-ramps and off-ramps.

The engineer's estimate for the contract is \$100 million. Bids are due September 29.

